ARCHIVAL RECORD – SOURCE METADATA PAGE

Standardized Master Template – Gene W. Poor Digital Archive

Collection: Gene W. Poor Digital Archive
File Name: 2010_toledoblade_toledomagazine_final.pdf
Type of Material: Newspaper – *The Blade* (Toledo Magazine Cover Feature)
Pages Included: Section B, Page 6
Title of Work: *Stop, Look and Marvel*
Author / Reporter: Ryan Smith
Publisher / Organization: *The Blade* (Toledo Blade Publishing Co.)
Place of Publication: Toledo, Ohio
Date of Publication: Sunday, June 6, 2010

Captured By: Dr. Gene W. Poor
Date Captured / Scanned: November 2025

Short Description:

Cover feature from *The Blade* spotlighting the work of LifeFormations, highlighting how the company combines engineering, technology, and artistry to create lifelike animatronic characters with personality and emotional presence.

Expanded Description / Subject:

Stop, Look and Marvel is a full-page feature from the *Toledo Blade's Toledo Magazine* section, profiling Dr. Gene W. Poor's pioneering work in animatronics and the early expansion of LifeFormations in Bowling Green, Ohio. The article documents how Poor transformed a small internal division he created into a thriving standalone operation that broadened the marketplace for animatronics beyond traditional entertainment.

The feature emphasizes the intersection of design, engineering, and creativity at the heart of Poor's work—showing how animatronic characters can embody personality, evoke emotional connection, and appear to possess a "soul." This moment marked a turning point in the evolution of LifeFormations, laying the foundation for its emergence as a leader in character design, immersive experiences, and lifelike robotic storytelling.

Digitized and preserved for educational, historical, and biographical reference by Dr. Gene W. Poor, November 2025.

Rights / Ownership:

Original newspaper copyright © 2010 *The Blade*.
Scanned for educational, historical, and archival documentation under fair use.

Gene Poor, founder of LifeFormations, with a replica of Abraham Lincoln. One of the company's clients is the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Illinois.

JUNGLE JIM'S INTERNATIONAL MARKET

A talking ear of corn and stick of butter do a comedy routine at Jungle Jim's International Market in Fairfield, Ohio.

Lara McGlaughlin, vice president of art at Lifeformations, styles a character 'one hair at a time.'

Stop, look, and marvel

LifeFormations aims to get your attention

By RYAN E. SMITH
BLADE STAFF WRITER

BOWLING GREEN — You may never find a more diverse crowd of characters than those hanging out at LifeFormations.

A recent visit found Thomas Edison in the lobby. A bloody samurai swordsman stood in the hall. A three-legged banjo player strummed away in the back near the world's tallest man, while the head of actor Samuel L. Jackson — just the head — rested comfortably in another room filled with other body parts.

That's the nature of a business that expects to dream up and craft more than 100 stationary and animatronic figures this year.

LifeFormations got its start 20 years ago when founder Gene Poor moved a division he'd created at a Toledo company to Bowling Green near I-75 and broadened its focus from mostly making trade show displays. Now its creations, which vacillate between the incredibly realistic to the wildly insane, can be found across the globe, anywhere from Universal Studios to Ripley's Believe It Or Not! attractions.

The guiding principle behind them is simple: "If you show [people] something they've never seen before, they'll stop. Once you've stopped them, then you can get their attention," says Mr. Poor, who also teaches entrepreneurship at Bowling Green State University.

It's a trick that works at museums, theme parks, retail outlets, restaurants, and even for individual collectors. Current clients include a Lebanese museum that ordered a model of the leader of Hezbollah and a wealthy European couple who want animated replicas of themselves.

"We'll animate anything," Mr. Poor says. "We give it personality. We give it soul."

No detail is too small, something vice president of art Lara McGlaughlin stresses as she works on the silicone head of a figure.

"Right now we're tweaking the hair ... one hair at a time," she says.

Most static characters sell for $5,000 and more, while animated ones start at $25,000 and go up based on the number and sophistication of pneumatic movements. Buyers say it's worth it.

"We use them as attractions," explains Debby Hartinger of Jungle Jim's International Market in Fairfield, Ohio. "People listen to them and they smile and they're excited. ... It's like: Wow, where's the next one?"

Among the store's animatronic installations are a talking ear of corn and stick of butter that do a comedy routine.

Forty-six LifeFormations figures greet visitors at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Illinois. Not only do they help illustrate scenes out of Lincoln's life, they look great in photos with guests, says communications manager Dave Blanchette.

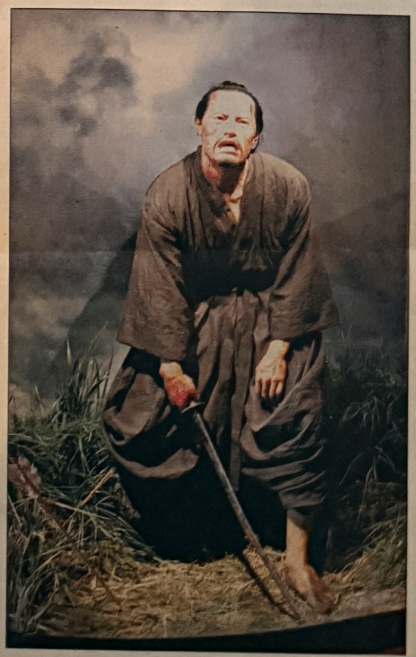
"It looks like they are literally standing with the Lincoln family."

Contact Ryan E. Smith at:
ryansmith@theblade.com
or 419-724-6103.

Mr. Poor and Ms. McGlaughlin with some of the works in progress at Lifeformations in Bowling Green. Their clients include Ripley's Believe It Or Not!.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

A slave auction scene from the Abraham Lincoln Presidental Library and Museum.



LifeFormations created the realistic samurai above.

For a video about LifeFormations, go to:
toledoblade.com

Blade Photos by Jeremy Wadsworth